AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-64. Cancelled

65. **(Currently Amended)** A method of reducing or preventing flowering in a plant, the method comprising expressing a polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) nucleotide sequences encoding a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence as shown in Figure 4 (SEQ ID NO: 3);

(b) the coding sequence shown in Figure 2 (SEQ ID NO: 1) or Figure 3 (SEQ ID NO: 2);

(c) nucleotide sequences being a fragment, derivative or homologue of the coding sequence of (b), said fragment, derivative or homologue encoding a polypeptide having LpTFL1-like activity;

(d) nucleotide sequences encoding a functionally active fragment, derivative or homologue of a polypeptide encoded by the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b), said fragment, derivative or homologue having LpTFL1-like activity;

(e) nucleotide sequences specifically hybridizing with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b) and encoding a polypeptide having LpTFL1-like activity; and

(f) nucleotide sequences having at least 65% identity with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b) and encoding a polypeptide having LpTFL1-like activity

in said plant.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the polynucleotide fragment defined in section (f) has a percentage value of identity with the sequence of (b) selected from the group consisting of 66%, 68%, 70%, 75%, 80%, 83%, 86%, 88%, 90%, 92%, 95%, 97% and 99%.

67. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 65, wherein the polynucleotide comprises the nucleotide sequence of bases -3600 to 1624, bases -3600 to 1242, bases 1 to 1642 and bases 1 to 1242 of Figure 3 (SEQ ID NO: 2).

68. (**Currently Amended**) The method of any one of claims 65 to 67, wherein the polypeptide encoded by said polynucleotide fragment includes the sequence YESP(K/R) located between residues about 100 and about 120 of SEQ ID NO: 3~~from the N-terminus~~.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of any one of claims 65 to 67, wherein said plant is a biennial or a perennial.

70. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 69, wherein said plant is a perennial.

71. (Previously Presented) The method according to any one of claims 65 to 67, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of crops belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*; soybean, potato, oilseed rape, sunflower, alfalfa, sugar cane and cotton; herbs such as anise, basil, bay laurel, caper, caraway, cayenne pepper, celery, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, leeks, lemon balm, liquorice, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sesame, tarragon and thyme; fruits and vegetables, such as banana, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry, and raspberry, carrot, coffee, eggplant, grapes, honeydew, mango, onion, papaya, peas, peppers, pineapple; rosaceous fruits such as apple, peach, pear, cherry and plum; vegetable brassicas such as brussel sprouts; woody species, such as eucalyptus, oak, pine and poplar.

72. (Previously Presented) The method according to any one of claims 65-67, wherein said plant is a monocot plant.

73. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 65, the method comprising inserting an expression cassette which comprises a promoter and a polynucleotide fragment as defined in claim 65 into a plant host cell, growing the said transformed host cell in a suitable culture medium and expressing said polynucleotide fragment to produce

the protein encoded by said polynucleotide, and wherein said expressed protein reduces or prevents flowering in said plant.

74. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 72, wherein said promoter is selected from the group consisting of a constitutive promoter, an inducible promoter and a developmentally regulated promoter.

75. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 73, wherein said promoter is selected from the group consisting of the monocot and dicot actin and ubiquitin promoters, monocot and dicot glyceraldehyde dehyrogenase (GAPDH) promoters, the cauliflower mosaic virus 35S (CaMV 35S) and 19S (CaMV 19S) promoters, the 35S CaMV promoter containing the translational enhancer (TMV omega element), the nopaline synthase (NOS) promoter, the octopine synthase (OCS) promoter.

76. (Previously Presented) A transgenic plant transformed with a polynucleotide as defined in claim 65 or an expression cassette as defined in claim 73.

77. (Previously Presented) The transgenic plant according to claim 76, wherein said plant is a biennial or a perennial.

78. (Previously Presented) The transgenic plant according to claim 77, wherein said plant is a perennial.

79. (Previously Presented) The transgenic plant according to claim 76, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of crops such as those belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*; soybean, potato, oilseed rape, sunflower, alfalfa, sugar cane and cotton; herbs such as anise, basil, bay laurel, caper, caraway, cayenne pepper, celery, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, leeks, lemon balm, liquorice, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sesame, tarragon and thyme; fruits and vegetables, such as

banana, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry, and raspberry, carrot, coffee, eggplant, grapes, honeydew, mango, onion, papaya, peas, peppers, pineapple; rosaceous fruits such as apple, peach, pear, cherry and plum; vegetable brassicas such as brussel sprouts; woody species, such as eucalyptus, oak, pine and poplar.

80. (Previously Presented) The transgenic plant of claim 76, which is a monocot plant.

81. (Previously Presented) A method of inducing early flowering in a plant, said method comprising expressing a polynucleotide fragment in a plant, said fragment comprising a sequence which is complementary to an mRNA encoded by a polynucleotide as defined in claim 65.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 81, wherein the expressed polynucleotide fragment is under the transcriptional control of a transcriptional regulatory sequence.

83. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 81, wherein said expressed polynucleotide fragment is from about 20 nucleotides in length up to the length of said mRNA.

84. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 81, wherein said expressed polynucleotide fragment is from about 50 to about 1500 nucleotides in length.

85. (Previously Presented) Use of a polynucleotide as defined in claim 65, an expression cassette as defined in claim 73 or the polypeptide encoded by said polynucleotide for significantly reducing or substantially preventing flowering in a plant.